172 centre of the flourishing trade which grew up under the realist government of the Arabs.

133 In the uplands of the middle Caucasus, eastward of the Daryal gorge, two rivers find their sources—the Yori and the Alazani. They run with the same direction as the Aragvi, and when the latter falls to the Mtkvari, these partner rivers take still the same direction, running parallel with the greater stream, until after a course of some two hundred and fifty miles, the two of them curl round to join the Mtkvari, first the Yori and then the Alazani entering it at points about two miles apart. The country of these two tributaries form two long sleeve-like valleys, converging gradually to the south-east. The upper part where the rivers take their source is high alpine country, the immemorial settlement of crude clans of Georgian mountaineers—the Khevsurs, who border on the Ossetians, the Pshavs and Tushes, who beyond the watershed have for neighbours to the north the Chechens, a forest-folk, and to eastward the highland-tribes of Daghestan. These Georgian clans from antique times were subject to the Georgian kings, who, in the first centuries of the Iberian kingdom, were making expeditions against the Phkhoels or Pshavs.

Lower, where the Aragvi, the Yori and the Alazani run through wide and gently sloping valleys, flanked by wooded bluffs, is the old settled land of Kakheti, rectangular between high Caucasus, the bleak escarpment of Daghestan and the Mtkvari—broad about one hundred miles and long close on two hundred. It is a fertile land, but wilder than Imereti and Kartli. It is mostly wooded and, above all, oaks abound. Pigs are more plentiful than in any part of the Caucasus; sheep and buffaloes particularly grow strong and plentiful.

●157 The people, as in all the serried valleys of the Caucasus, have their own character—and differ somewhat from the other Georgians. Strong they are and lithe, their limbs well hung, with daring eyes, alert, keen, animal. Proud they are and arrogant, great talkers, lovers of compliment, makers of faction; reckless and loyal they are ever without reason, with gallant laughter, honourable without thought, faithful and generous; these peasants are great noblemen.

174 In early history the country of Kakheti was divided into three; between the Yori and the Daghestan mountains was Kakheti, which in the eighteenth century still retained the name particularly as Inner Kakheti; the land between the Yori and the Mtkvari was Kukheti and the lower region, above the confluence of the three rivers was Hereti. According to

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186 like the Spaniards and the Irish, have come under many forms of alien political and cultural coercion. They accept this domination, but they do not take it seriously, and when the domination passes the people that have suffered it remain in character much the same as formerly. It would be untrue to say that they do not resist such domination; they frequently resist it savagely, but they resist as a nation, as a living animal, and their resistance is not for a principle. Thus we find throughout the history of Georgia, as of Spain and of Ireland, that it is the nation that is held sacred and not this or that principle. And if one people or the other has fought with ostensibly religious aims, it will be found that it is because the religious cause represented the national cause. The Georgians are not a religious people, neither are they a political people, but they have a very strong and abiding sense of their community as a nation, and their individuality as a nation. This sense of national individuality is very old—far older than the clamant sense of nationhood which is voiced by so many of the comparatively young European nations. The Georgian sense of themselves as a nation certainly dates from the time of the mediæval Georgian kingdom, and it is voiced by Rusthaveli and others of their mediæval poets.

The sense of nation is in itself a kind of æstheticism—a form of sensual taste—a preference for one's kind in contrast to other kind.

On the other hand no man—or no people—of essential æstheticism, of taste, can conceive a fixed preference for a certain religious or political conception. Martyrdom is essentially a breach of æsthetics, while heroism on the other hand is an orgasm of individualistic artistry. Thus we find that the Georgians are often, indeed always, heroes and never, or very seldom, martyrs.

186 In this "*æsthetic irresponsibility*" of the Georgians lies the
● 157 secret both of their charm as a nation and of their survival as a strongly individualistic national unit. The Georgians retain in a remarkable degree, both individually and as a people, the clear and gentle outlook, the free and inquiring intelligence and the high amoral and untrammelled mind of primitive man. The generosity, the loving simplicity and the humanity, the animal love of life which characterizes the Homeric poems and the ancient literature of the Celts and Scandinavians lights the pages of the mediæval Georgian epics and declares indeed the mind of the Georgian of these days.

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186 It is this "*æsthetic irresponsibility*" which has secured
●167 the integrity of the Georgians through the vicissitudes of their history. Many political systems and many creeds have lain heavy on the country. They have passed away, and the Georgian has remained, laughing, easy, unchanged and untroubled.

186 The remoteness of the geographical position of the country has been one of the fundamental causes of the strong sense of kind—of national individuality—of the Georgians. This remoteness has at once isolated them and caused them to develop a sentiment of long and ancient and independent communion among themselves.

At the same time the climate is a mellow joyous climate and the wine is good, so that neither the air nor the diet are conducive to the worrying over principles and the gnawing over grievances.

000 The unfortunate Armenians, on the other hand, nursing hard dogma upon their icy uplands, made material in their bleak economic want, have as a nation come very near at times to that physical extinction which usually awaits the martyr, and to that cultural extinction which falls to the lot of a community composed of individual materialists. For during the early Middle Ages the Armenians fought doggedly against the Muhammadan invaders as the enemies of the Christian religion and they entered with enthusiastic heat into the interminable theological disputes that rent the East Christian world. But the individual materialism which is inherent in men born in a sterile unfriendly land always drew off the most vigorous spirits of each succeeding generation into the services of rich masters—Byzantine, Arab, Mongol and Turk. Thus we may view upon a very broad and general background of the history of these peoples—the Georgians in their broad and mellow land, with their troubadours and light philosophies, their joistings, their drinking-bouts, their heroes and their games; and the Armenians, a dour and dogged yet self-pitying people, with their dogmas and their rites, their monkish chroniclers, their hard soldiers, their merchants and their martyrs.

175x The mediæval Kingdom of Georgia struck the imagination of Western travellers, Marco Polo, Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo and others, as an isolated community of Western culture and Christian religion surviving in the midst of powerful Mussulman tyrannies and half barbarous tribes and peoples. And we now may marvel less at the military prowess which main-

[Medieval Georgia]

JUSTICE IN GEORGIA

the Middle Ages, we discover that the abominations are usually perpetrated by the agents of religious corporations or by groups inspired by those fixed ideas known as ideals. The psychology of cruelty is exceedingly obscure; there are the terrible records of the animal cruelty of half-savage hordes like the Mongol invaders of Persia and Russia; there are the defensive cruelties of those resorting to political repression through fear; and there are the administrative cruelties carried out by judges and agents of the law, and, more especially during the Middle Ages, by the agents of the Church. A combination of moral fervour and an insane sensualism seems to inspire the latter kind of cruelty, and when we consider the unnatural environment in which the agents both of the law and of the Church lived, particularly during the Middle Ages, it seems probable that both the moral fervour and the strain of deliberate cruelty which characterizes the historical psychologies of judges and priests may be attributed to a combination of mental and physical repression. From those dried sterile brains the cruelty seemed to ooze like some filthy distillation of the once clean and natural juices of their aborted bodies.

Now the Georgians were not men full of fears, and they did not repress themselves. The fine bright spirit of the mediæval knight, King Dmitri Tavdadébuli, a soldier loved by his people for his justice, his kindness and his charity, a lover of song and of women and a deep philosopher, who at the end could give himself, all naturally, to execution that he might save the people from invasion—that spirit type of the Georgian, laughs down the ages at the men of moral fervour, of repressions and oppressions, with their pincers, their thumbscrews and their racks; and if in the later age of Georgian history, after the Division of the Kingdom, we see cruelties everywhere through the pages of the histories of Kartli, Imereti and Kakheti, we must remember that the demoralization of the long Turkish and Persian wars had eaten deep into the spirit of the Georgians. And even during this period, their cruelties are the cruelties of animals in triumph and animals in fear, quick mutilations with sword and knife, comparatively clean; while over the Latin West in those three centuries there hung the shadow of the torturing Inquisition.

The bulk of cases in mediæval Georgia, apart from those of a criminal nature, were concerned with disputes over the boundaries of property. In such cases, a settlement was arrived at by ordeal of oath and by arbitration. Under Georgian law, as under Islamic law, the oaths of the plaintiff